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319-01 Writing as Social Action

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Writing as Social Action
ENGL 319/Spring 2016

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Course Information
This writing intensive course will examine the history and practice of writing as social action, promoting the Jesuit rhetorical tradition of *eloquentia perfecta*, the art of communicating well for the common good. This tradition combines eloquence with reflection and discernment, and asks students to both analyze and create writing related to social action across a variety of contexts, purposes, genres, and mediums. The goal of the course is to develop students’ writing abilities while also asking them to reflect upon their deeper values and place within the larger world.

In addition to meeting the criteria for the Writing flag, ENGL 319 incorporates the objectives of the Ethics/Religion and Society requirement by integrating ongoing discussion of the moral and ethical implications of writing, rhetoric, and power in both historic and contemporaneous society. This course will examine the significance of rhetoric and persuasion in social action, and ask students to reflect upon—and critically examine—the ways in which rhetoric can be used to either empower or oppress particular people or groups. By cultivating qualities of compassion alongside building skills of written, oral, and digital communication, students are encouraged to turn their rhetorical abilities toward social action in areas that are most meaningful to them. This informed engagement will constitute the products of this course, as students compose texts meant to intervene in the world around them, for the greater good, in solidarity with and for others.

By the end of the course students will:
- Understand the history of the Jesuit rhetorical tradition and become familiar with the historic orators and rhetoricians who inspire it.
- Demonstrate competency of rhetorical concepts and identify their uses in a variety of situations.
- Apply rhetorical concepts to texts they encounter for the purposes of analysis and understanding.
- Interrogate and analyze the ethical implications of writing, rhetoric, and power in the social realm, historically and contemporaneously.
- Reflect upon the place of communication in society and practice compassion across difference.
- Utilize rhetorical tools to initiate social action to intervene in areas that resonate with their own deeply held values.
• Research issues that are meaningful to them for the purpose of supporting a cause, movement, or other socially invested organization.
• Compose texts that are rhetorically effective and ethically informed.
• Collaborate with people, agencies, organizations, and other students to promote justice through writing and social action.
• Adapt the principles of eloquentia perfecta in their own lives to become rhetorically skillful, socially engaged citizens through their own composing practices.

Required Texts

Main Textbook

PDF/Digital Readings

Historic Rhetorical Texts


Cicero. Excerpts from Orator.


Quintilian. Excerpts from Institutes of Oratory.

Speeches/Orations
Speeches from Cicero, Demosthenes, Pericles (from Thucydides)

Fell, Margaret. “Women’s Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed by the Scriptures.” From Quaker Heritage Press, Online Texts.

Douglass, Frederick. “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” Rochester, NY 1852.


Rhetorical Theory


**Major Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Inquiry</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Term Inquiry</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Engagement Inquiry</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remediation Inquiry</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Portfolio</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Course Policies/Guidelines**

**Amount of Writing**
In this course you can expect to produce at least 50 pages of double-spaced prose or the equivalent (approximate number of words = 12,500). About half of that amount will be the final polished versions of your five major writing assignments; the other half will be invention and exploratory exercises, short in- and out-of-class writing assignments, blog postings, rough drafts, formal drafts, written peer responses to your classmates’ writing, etc. You should expect to have some written assignment due in practically every class period over the entire semester—either
writing due for class or writing you do in class. Be prepared to write regularly for this course, as we will need to practice the concepts we are learning and acquire the skills necessary to use them effectively in real world settings.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the representation of another’s images, words, or ideas as one’s own. It includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work (whether these ideas appear in traditional print text, in an image etc.), and/or the inappropriate, unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. Plagiarizing is a serious offense and can ruin a student’s academic career. As part of our work in this course includes significant research, ethical attribution of work and ideas will be an important part of our learning process. (Please see the University’s policy on academic integrity below.)

**Conduct, Consideration, and Citizenship:**

The use of rhetoric is the basis of policy-making in a democratic society, and as such this classroom will endeavor to integrate the principles of choice and participation as much as possible. Near the beginning of the course, we will collaboratively build a classroom Mission Statement and make choices about how we will handle issues that fall outside of the parameters we have set for our space.

The classroom environment is co-created by everyone in that classroom and is most effective when it takes the needs of all parties into account. As responsible citizens who have freely chosen to engage in this community, I would request that we be mutually respectful of the time, attention, and goals of all participants. All members of this community are welcome to express their ideas about what would foster the most conducive atmosphere for learning, and to speak up if those needs are not being met. Included in the many skills we will practice this semester are to acclimate to the idea of being responsible and participating members of a professional community and to keep in mind the long term goals we hope to achieve through the day to day application of focus, intention, and applied skills. Each individual is an important member of this community and affects the experience of all the other members. To respect the goals you have set, as well as the goals of others, please keep this responsibility in mind when entering the classroom.

**In addition…**

- All members of this community are welcome to express their ideas freely and openly.
- We agree to listen to others with respect and consideration and will not become hostile toward others, even when we disagree.
- We will use respectful, ethical language and endeavor to be sensitive to the racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation identities of our classmates.
- We agree to be polite and friendly to one another.
- Light snacks and closed beverage containers are welcome in the classroom.
- We will turn off cell phone ringers, refrain from texting, and avoid off-topic discussion during class time so that our classmates have the opportunity to focus. If students do not follow these guidelines, we agree that we should __________ TBA! ______________
• We are free to take emergency calls, use the restroom, or attend to other personal and urgent business as we deem necessary.
• The instructor is willing to work with students individually whenever they request. She can be informed during or after class if students would like additional information about anything pertaining to our class.
• All students are invited to inform the instructor if there is something that they are uncomfortable or dissatisfied with in class. This can be done during class, after class, through email, or through an anonymous note.
• We will remember that each individual is an important member of this community and that our presence affects the experience of all the other members.
• We will respect the goals we have set as individuals, as well as the goals of others.

Other Policies

Late Assignments
Turning assignments in on the due date helps to make the class run more smoothly and is also in your best interest, as it assures that you will not fall behind with the work required for this course and that you have sufficient time to revise and prepare your drafts. In addition, because we are practicing writing in the workplace, we should attempt to observe the expectations for professional behavior as much as possible, which includes being accountable to the other members of your team and meeting deadlines on time. At the same time, unavoidable events may arise that would make following through on a deadline impossible.

1) If an assignment is going to be late due to an unforeseen emergency, you will agree to let the instructor know in advance and make arrangements to turn in the work as soon as possible.

2) If an assignment is late without prior negotiation with the instructor, each business day that it remains outstanding will result in the lowering of the grade by five percent, or ½ of a letter grade.

Absences
Much of the learning in ENGL 319 happens through "engaged learning" in class, via in-class inquiry activities, in-class writing assignments, class discussion, and group interaction that cannot be easily made up or replicated outside of class. Class time will be highly interactive, requiring frequent participation, discussion, teamwork, in-class writing, and responding to writing. It is imperative that you attend each class period—it is not possible to learn the material in this course or to successfully integrate the Learning Outcomes without attending class; a significant amount of the knowledge offered in this course occurs inside the classroom and may not be included within the assigned texts. In addition, this course will incorporate many collaborative and group practices that require the presence of the members of our group to participate directly. In addition to absences affecting your class participation grade and overall ability to incorporate the material, the proposed policy is:

1) You will agree to make your best effort to come to class on time every day that we are scheduled to meet.

2) If you are unable to attend for whatever reason, you are responsible for getting the course materials and completing the daily assignments.

3) Any late assignments due to absence will be assessed according to the policy above.
4) After five absences, your grade will be lowered by 5% or ½ of a letter grade unless otherwise negotiated in advance.
5) Ten or more absences will result in a failing grade unless otherwise negotiated in advance.
6) There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, with the exception of University recognized religious holidays. (If you will be absent due to a religious observance, please inform the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of class.)

**Tardiness**

Just as regular attendance is important to success in this course, arriving late can likewise hinder your ability to learn, hear, or integrate the material. Please do your best to arrive on time, and if you know you will be late, please email the instructor in advance if possible. If another commitment will habitually result in lateness to the class (such as another class immediately preceding this one, or a job shift that ends near the beginning of class) please talk with the instructor; it may be in your best interest to take a different section if other commitments will make you repeatedly late.

**Cell phones, disruptive speech, and other social distractions**

For the consideration of your class members, please turn cell phones off or set on vibrate mode. If taking an emergency call is unavoidable, please exit the room to talk in the hallway. Please be considerate of the attention and time of your classmates – within a closed community, what one person does affects the entire room. Likewise, if other students are engaging in behaviors that you find disruptive or distracting, please feel free to respectfully request that they consider altering this behavior in order to more fully meet the needs of the class. We are all responsible adults in this class – you are responsible for your behavior within the community and its effects upon others, as well as expressing yourself respectfully to others when your needs are not being met.

**A word to the wise…..**

*Back Up Your Work/File Formats!!!!!*

You are responsible for keeping copies of your written course work — at least two copies in two different locations — so that if you should have an MSF (massive system failure), you can recover your work. Platform compatibility, file transfer, and e-mail attachments are sometimes irritating, though rarely unsolvable, problems. It is your responsibility as sender/writer to submit files to your instructor and to your classmates in an accessible, downloadable format. All of your papers will be submitted electronically via Canvas.

**Viewing Grades in Canvas**

Points you receive for scored activities will be posted to the Canvas Grade Book. Click on the Grades link in the course menu to view your assignment scores.

**Grade Posting Policy**
In general, you should expect to receive feedback on short, graded assignments within 48 hours of submission, and within one week on longer assignments (e.g., major essays). Exceptions to this will be announced in class.

Assignment Submission

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise instructed, including in-class writing. For this reason, if you have a laptop, it is important to bring it almost every day.

Incomplete Policy

Incompletes are not considered except in the case of a true, documented emergency near the end of the semester that would preclude a student from completing final work. To be considered for an incomplete, students must have already completed at least 75% of the work in the course prior to the emergency. Incompletes are not given to avoid failing grades or to offer extensions on deadlines.

Technical Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to Canvas through a supported Web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser Tool from the Technology Services Web site.
- Check your computer against Xavier’s suggested minimum computer requirements: [http://www.xavier.edu/ts/students/Computer-Recommendations.cfm](http://www.xavier.edu/ts/students/Computer-Recommendations.cfm)

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas, contact the HELP Desk at (513) 745-HELP/4357 or visit the HELP Desk Web site, or contact Canvas at 855-778-9967.

Academic Support

Learning Assistance Center

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides support services to facilitate learning. The LAC has two main purposes: tutoring and disability services. The tutoring services include subject specific tutoring, drop-in sessions, study skills assistance, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). For students with documented disabilities, services include accommodations such as extended time on exams, reduced distraction testing environment, note-taking assistance, and assistive technology. Services are provided in a positive and encouraging environment, which promotes appreciation for diversity and cura personalis. Students in an online course can contact the LAC at (513) 745-3280 to set up an appointment. The LAC is located in the Conaton
Learning Commons room 514.  [http://www.xavier.edu/lac/](http://www.xavier.edu/lac/)

**Writing Center**

The [Writing Center](http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/) offers free one-on-one tutoring on writing assignments for all Xavier students. Students in an online course can contact the Center at (513) 745-2875 to set up an appointment. Sessions can be conducted in multiple ways, including discussions by phone and by email at writingcenter@xavier.edu. The Writing Center is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 400. [http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/)

**University Policies**

**Academic Honesty Policy**

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited, as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

**Copyright Policy**

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit the [library copyright Web page](http://www.xavier.edu/library/copyright/copyright_policy_2009.pdf) and download the following for reference purposes: [http://www.xavier.edu/library/copyright/copyright_policy_2009.pdf](http://www.xavier.edu/library/copyright/copyright_policy_2009.pdf)

Xavier University, Blackboard course sites contain copyrights held by the instructor, other individuals or institutions. Such material is used for educational purposes in accord with copyright law and/or with permission given by the owners of the original material. You may download one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you (1) do not modify it, (2) use it only for the duration of this course, and (3) include both this notice and any copyright notice originally included with the material. Beyond this use, no material from the course web site may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material placed on the web site.
Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course instructor and contact Cassandra Jones in the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Library Services for Online Students

As an online student at Xavier University you have access to the Library Collections and Services. The Library databases can be accessed from off campus using your Xavier login.

Information on borrowing Library materials. We also have many e-books that can be viewed on your computer.

There are many ways to get help from a Librarian including chat text and email.